United Nations S/PV.4497

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4497th meeting

Tuesday, 26 March 2002, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Petersen	(Norway)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Ngoh Ngoh
	China	Mr. Wang Ying fan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zínser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Ms. Tan
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-30290 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Expression of sympathy concerning earthquake in Afghanistan

The President: On behalf of the Security Council, let me convey our deepest condolences to the Afghan authorities and people following the devastating earthquake in northern Afghanistan. Our thoughts and prayers go to the thousands of Afghan families bereaved and affected by this calamity, in a land which has had far more than its share of suffering in recent years. There can be no doubt that the international community will help the Interim Administration and the local Afghans deal with this tragedy and help the victims, as we are helping the Afghans heal the wounds of war and create lasting peace and development in their country.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, Spain, Tajikistan and Turkey, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Dauth (Australia), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Sharma (India), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (the Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan), Mr. MacKay (New Zealand), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Arias (Spain), Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) and Mr. Pamir (Turkey) took seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on the agenda. The Council is meeting with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, document S/2002/278.

I should also like to draw attention to the following documents: S/2002/274, which contains a letter date 14 March 2002 from the representative of the United Kingdom transmitting a report on the activities of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, and S/2002/283, which contains a joint letter from the representatives of Afghanistan and the Russian Federation transmitting a Joint Russian-Afghan Statement of 12 March 2002.

I welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, Her Excellency Ms. Louise Fréchette, to this meeting and invite her to take the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I am pleased to be able to address the Security Council on the question of Afghanistan this morning. But it is sad to have to do so on a day when there is yet more bad news from that unhappy country. You have just referred, Sir, to the severe earthquake in the north of the country, which has caused heavy loss of life and thousands of injuries, and left tens of thousands without shelter. The Secretary-General issued a statement this morning expressing his distress at this news, which I am sure we all share.

United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have already sent relief items and assessment teams into the area. A helicopter with people from the United Nations and the International Security Assistance Force is currently surveying the damage. Chairman Karzai and Mr. Nigel Fisher, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, intend to visit the area tomorrow.

I note the large number of non-members of the Council participating in this open meeting, and I am encouraged by the continuing interest and support of the international community in helping the Afghans rebuild their society. Above all, I am pleased to be able to introduce the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan. As you know, in addition to providing an update on recent events, the report also presents the Secretary-General's concept for the future United Nations presence in Afghanistan, for which we will seek the endorsement of the Security Council.

Before addressing the structure of the new mission, I would like to highlight a few developments that have occurred in Afghanistan since the report was issued. As the report was released only last week and as the list of speakers before us is fairly long, I hope to be brief.

The Interim Administration and the United Nations have made education a key priority. The first day of the school year, which was last Saturday, marked a major step in getting children back to school. Chairman Karzai launched a nationwide back-to-school programme at a high school in Kabul, and similar ceremonies took place throughout the country. Carol Bellamy, of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), was also in Kabul for the occasion. It is estimated that, around the country, 1.5 million students were able to return to school. As part of the programme, UNICEF organized the delivery of more than 7,000 tons of supplies to 3,000 schools across the country. These will provide primary-school learning materials to more than 1.8 million children, and teaching materials to 51,000 teachers. UNICEF is also working to help restore some of the 2,000 schools that have been damaged or destroyed since 1979. In addition, 500 tents will be provided in areas where there are no schools.

There is other good news, too. Increased rainfall has left many farmers in the west, north and north-east of the country optimistic about the next crop, after three years of drought. There has been a massive increase in land under cultivation. That optimism is reflected in recent population movements. Internally displaced persons have, in some areas, started to return home spontaneously, without waiting for assistance from aid organizations. Similarly, a record number of refugees have benefited from an assisted-return programme organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Interim Administration and the Government of Pakistan. An average of 10,000 refugees a day crossed into Afghanistan from Pakistan between 18 and 22 March. More than 83,000 Afghans have returned since the programme began on 1 March. Six more registration centres will be opened by UNHCR in Pakistan within the next few weeks to cope with this accelerating increase in demand. Preparations are under way for the start of a similar scheme for refugees from Iran, beginning in April.

While we are heartened by this demonstration of popular confidence in Afghanistan's future, we are also concerned about nutritional deficits in some parts of the country. Rapid emergency assessments are being undertaken in areas identified as having high rates of malnutrition. The recent outbreak of scurvy in the Taiwara district of Ghor province, which resulted in 20 deaths, highlights the severity of the malnutrition problem and the need for carefully targeted interventions. The World Food Programme (WFP) will shortly launch a new emergency programme in the most-affected areas. Up to 8.8 million people, including internally displaced persons, will receive food assistance over the next three months. In addition, by December an estimated 1 million schoolchildren will receive food handouts.

And yet, even while United Nations agencies have been gearing up to meet these major challenges — the back-to-school programme, the return of refugees and the continuing malnutrition crisis — they have also become increasingly alarmed by the slow pace of funding. Almost a month ago, at Kabul, we presented the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People for this year, spelling out requirements of $1.18 billion. We now urgently need to convert the generous pledges already made into actual contributions. Otherwise we shall not be able to carry on with the vital activities I have just described.

Turning to the political front, here too we can report significant progress. The first stage of the Loya Jirga process will soon be completed with the public announcement of the rules and procedures for the selection and indirect election of participants in the Loya Jirga and for the convening of the Loya Jirga itself. Those rules have been developed by the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga following a process of

consultation that took place across Afghanistan and at all levels of society.

A budget has been drawn up to cover the complicated organizational and logistical arrangements needed to convene the Loya Jirga. We are extremely grateful for the generous contributions already made by Germany — which has contributed $3 million — and by the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Commission. The Commission's secretariat, with the support of Mr. Brahimi's Office, has designed a public information campaign to inform Afghans throughout the country about the Loya Jirga process. That campaign is in part supported by the Open Media Fund for Afghanistan, which was recently established on the initiative of the well-known journalist and expert on Afghanistan, Mr. Ahmed Rashid. It is perhaps a sign of how things have changed that a man who became famous for his reporting on war and oppression in Afghanistan can now lend his name to the process of democratic change there.

Recent trips by the Loya Jirga Commission to the provinces have confirmed the enormous interest in the Loya Jirga process across the country. In Herat, a meeting hastily convened in the space of two hours was attended by over 1,000 people. When it was discovered that no women were present, another meeting was organized at a girls' school nearby, and was attended by several hundred women. On the other hand, the possibility that the Loya Jirga might be intimidated or corrupted remains a key concern. There are reports that in Herat people have been arrested for speaking out in favour of the Loya Jirga. In other regions people claim that they cannot speak openly about the process for fear of their lives. Addressing those concerns is directly related to the question of security, to which I will now turn.

The security situation across the country as a whole appears to have improved somewhat over the past few weeks. There have, however, been further violent incidents in a few places. In particular, clashes took place between Hazara factions in Daikundi, in the province of Oruzgan. Mr. Brahimi met with representatives of those factions, who then agreed to accept an independent delegation from the Interim Administration to mediate their differences. That mediation process is under way. In Kandahar a grenade was thrown into a crowded bazaar, killing one person and injuring others. Finally, there are reports that Taliban elements are regrouping in southern Paktia for a guerrilla campaign against the Interim Administration and foreign troops. Those incidents remind us how volatile the situation in Afghanistan still is and should warn us not to be complacent. The concerns about security expressed in the Secretary-General's report remain all too pertinent.

I would also like to address the related, and increasingly important, question of the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. A working group composed of the Interim Administration, the United Nations, the International Security Assistance Force and other parties has been established to find solutions to this question. This group, which has already met twice, is preparing proposals that will be considered at a conference on security financing to be held in Geneva on 3 April.

There have been encouraging signs form the Ministry of Defence, commanders and soldiers that many ex-combatants would be interested in reintegration programmes. Work is under way to identify labour-intensive projects and other schemes that can employ former combatants and provide them with an alternative to war. One promising possibility is to train a further 5,000 deminers to help clear the vast number of mines still scattered around the country.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has continued to build on its success in reducing crime and improving security in Kabul. On 19 March, the command of the Kabul multinational brigade was handed over to the German contingent, while the United Kingdom continues to maintain overall command of the ISAF. ISAF is about to complete its training of the 1st Battalion of the Afghan National Guard. The unit will hold a parade on 4 April, and will thereafter assume its new role alongside the existing palace guard.

Preparations for the training of a national Afghan police force are progressing. An advance party of a German training team arrived on 16 March. The six-week basic training course will start in July, when the renovation of the police academy is complete. A public information campaign is under way to attract new recruits. The National Commission on Police Reform has also started its work.

Now I would like to turn to the important issue of human rights. As stated in the Secretary-General's report, four standing working groups were established at the Afghan national workshop on human rights held

in Kabul on 9 March. With the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in particular, those working groups are planning programmes to implement the human rights provisions of the Bonn Agreement, including the establishment of an independent Human Rights Commission, the investigation and monitoring of human rights abuses and the provision of human rights education. The establishment of the Commission is particularly pressing in the light of reports of continuing human rights abuses, such as the attack on ethnic Pashtun civilians in the north of the country, which are described in the Secretary-General's report.

With regard to a related matter, after wide consultations, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has prepared a paper on the Judicial Commission outlining its proposed mission, composition, powers and operating procedures. The paper provides a necessary basis for proceeding with the establishment of that Commission, as required by the Bonn Agreement.

Finally, I should like to say something about the future United Nations mission to Afghanistan, which has been provisionally named the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). In his report, the Secretary-General proposes a mission structure supported by two pillars: pillar I for political affairs and pillar II for relief, recovery and reconstruction activities. The proposed structure contains mechanisms for inter-pillar coordination at both the mission headquarters and the regional levels, thus ensuring that political and reconstruction activities support each other rather than run at cross purposes.

A key innovation of UNAMA is the integration of humanitarian relief, recovery and reconstruction activities within a single pillar. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in charge of pillar II will thus be responsible for direction and oversight of all United Nations relief and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. This integrated configuration will make it easier to work closely with the legitimate Afghan authorities to rebuild Afghanistan in a sustainable way.

Another innovation is the Secretary-General's proposal that the mission have a light expatriate footprint. This is to ensure that Afghans take the lead in the post-conflict recovery phase and that the bulk of foreign aid pledged to Afghanistan actually goes to Afghans.

Human rights will be central to the purposes and functions of the new mission, both as it fulfils the provisions of the Bonn Agreement directly related to human rights and as it seeks to integrate human rights fully into its humanitarian, reconstruction and political activities, including the rule of law and national capacity-building.

A senior human rights coordinator in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will work with staff in both of the mission's main operational pillars and will also coordinate human rights activities under both pillars. The coordinator will serve as the principal contact for the independent Human Rights Commission and will liaise with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations human rights mechanisms. Staff, including Afghan nationals, will be equipped to perform the human rights aspects of their work, including the integration of rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches, in the Mission's relief and reconstruction activities.

With regard to policing, Germany has taken the lead in this sector and has initiated a number of significant projects related to police reform. It has dispatched a highly experienced team of police advisers to Kabul to undertake this work. Germany has made clear, however, that assistance will also be required from other donors and international organizations. The two meetings convened in Berlin over the past two months on the subject of policing were aimed at securing such commitments.

In order to support German efforts in Afghanistan and to ensure that UNAMA has adequate resources to coordinate closely with the German team, the Afghan Ministry of Interior and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), as well as to provide advice to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Secretary-General has recommended that three police advisers be added to the mission. Both Germany and the Ministry of Interior have welcomed that recommendation.

The new mission in Afghanistan will face extremely complex challenges. I believe that the Secretary-General's proposals, developed in close consultation with Mr. Brahimi and his team, are an imaginative and constructive response to the

operational challenges on the ground. I look forward to the Council's discussion of those proposals, and I very much hope that the Council will endorse them.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): Welcome to New York, Mr. Minister. It is a privilege for us that this meeting is taking place under your presidency.

First of all, I should like to convey the condolences and solidarity of the French people to the Afghan people, struck once again by a cruel ordeal: the earthquake that has just destroyed an entire region in the north of the country and claimed thousands of victims.

The representative of Spain will be making a statement on behalf of the entire European Union, and France subscribes fully to it. Therefore, I shall limit my statement to a few comments.

This meeting is taking a first look at the record six months after the beginning of the military intervention by the coalition, three months after the Interim Administration began to function and three months before the convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga.

That record, which Louise Fréchette has just described in eloquent detail, is clearly positive. The ground covered over the past six months is impressive. The fight against terrorism has been marked by several decisive elements and is being pursued vigorously and relentlessly. The United States and its allies, including France, are tracking down Al Qaeda elements day by day.

The political transition is also progressing. The Afghan people is regaining control of its destiny. The Emergency Loya Jirga, scheduled for June, will be a new step towards the creation of a multi-ethnic, representative and democratic Government. The responsible conduct of the transitional authorities has made it possible largely to avoid repeating past errors, such as the ordeals in 1992 in Kabul or in 1997 in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Finally, the reconstruction of Afghanistan has now begun with the assistance of the entire international community, illustrated by the pledges made in Tokyo. Throughout the country there are signs of this true rebirth. The most moving example, referred to by Louise Fréchette, is undoubtedly the beginning of the school year: last Saturday, a million and a half children of both sexes literally rushed to their schools and to knowledge. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hubert Védrine, who was in Kabul at the time, shared this moment of hope by visiting the two schools rebuilt by France — the Esteqlal high school for boys and the Malalai high school for girls.

The success of the reconstruction now depends in part on good coordination between bilateral and multilateral donors, organized in the Afghan Support Group and the Implementation Group, or through the United Nations system. Locally, one person, in our view, should provide this indispensable coordination: Lakhdar Brahimi.

In New York too, impressive ground has been covered in only six months. A series of resolutions were adopted, at a sustained pace on the principles for a settlement — resolution 1378 (2001); the endorsement of the Bonn Agreement — resolution 1383 (2001); the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) — resolution 1386 (2001); and, finally, the creation of a de-territorialized regime against Al Qaeda to replace the sanctions against Afghanistan — resolution 1390 (2002).

A new draft resolution is now being prepared. It will allow for the rapid implementation of the excellent recommendations of the Secretary-General, as described to us by Louise Fréchette. It will give structure and a unified form to the United Nations presence, which has developed, with impressive effectiveness, under the authority of Lakhdar Brahimi. France is working on this draft, which will be submitted to the Council tomorrow during our consultations.

The issue of security remains a more difficult one. Agreement is emerging on the extension of ISAF beyond the time frame set out in resolution 1386 (2001) — that is, 20 June. Together we will have to decide on the right time to announce it and also on the right time frame.

Regarding the geographic expansion of the Force beyond Kabul and its vicinity, the position of the major contributors is clear: they are not in favour of it. Indeed, a force spread out beyond Kabul and its environs would have to be involved in settling conflicts falling under the purview of Afghan authority.

Absolute priority, then, must be given to the training of a unified Afghan police force and army. We must create an army that is free from ethnic and

regional divisions and from the influence of political parties and warlords. We must also use all available instruments to help in achieving security and law and order in the provinces. The economic lever should then be used with determination. Assistance in reconstruction cannot be brought to provinces where local authorities commit massive violations of human rights or maintain a climate of insecurity. On the other hand, of course, humanitarian assistance should not be made conditional.

France will participate fully in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. It has already entered into specific commitments with regard to health care, education, agriculture, administration, the preservation of its patrimony, training of the future Afghan army and police, as well as assistance in combating drugs.

The fulfilment of these commitments has been the subject of in-depth discussions with the Afghan authorities, first of all during the visit of President Hamid Karzai to Paris on 28 February, and, quite recently, last Sunday, when Mr. Hubert Védrine went to Kabul.

The President: I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish)*: Mr. Minister, your presence at this meeting honours us and also attests to your country's commitment to the subject that we are considering today.

May I begin by expressing our solidarity with the Afghan people in these painful times as a result of the severe earthquake. We would request the Ambassador to pass on our sincerest condolences.

We are grateful for the presentation made by the Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Fréchette, and for the report of the Secretary-General, which emphasizes the historical complexities of the situation in Afghanistan, as well as the shape of the challenges to be confronted by the United Nations in the months and years to come.

We agree with the Secretary-General that security is, one the one hand, a vital prerequisite for safeguarding the peace process in Afghanistan and that it is also, on the other hand, the first issue to be addressed in the context of the reconstruction of that country, as is indicated in the relevant paragraphs of the report, including paragraphs 45 and 126. This is the most important need of the Afghan people at the present time, and the Security Council, through its actions, must contribute to meeting it.

Indeed, without security, the Interim Administration will not be able to fulfil its functions adequately throughout the territory. Without security, the legitimacy of the outcome of the Loya Jirga will be called into question. Without security, the United Nations presence will face difficulties, and, without security, it will be virtually impossible to provide humanitarian assistance.

Colombia therefore expresses its resolute support for expanding the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) beyond Kabul. As paragraph 59 of the report emphasizes, "the main threats to the Interim Administration emanate from the provinces".

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to invite those countries that lead the Force or are members of it to explore mechanisms to respond to this appeal from the Afghan people. We have taken note of the reservations expressed thus far in this connection.

This could be the best way to begin to respond to the risks and the threats that are mentioned in paragraph 123 of the report of the Secretary-General. In the face of these risks, it is necessary to strengthen security measures in order to meet short-, medium- and long-term needs and to make it possible for Afghanistan to be a viable country from an economic and political standpoint.

In this respect, I wish to emphasize the report's assertion that:

> "The only way to ensure the eradication of terrorism from Afghan soil is by empowering the country's legitimate authorities to police their own territory." *(S/2002/278, para. 123)*

In addition, on the subject of security, we must always bear in mind the military operation that has been under way for six months now, fighting against Al Qaeda and Taliban forces, and realize that, as things stand now, there is a need for careful coordination with the activities of ISAF if it is expanded to the remainder of Afghanistan.

We would like to refer to some specific points of importance to our delegation.

First, let me express our deep satisfaction at the return to school, on 23 March, of boys and girls. We welcome the actions of the Interim Administration that

made it possible to fulfil this objective, and, in doing so, we extend our appreciation to all of those who facilitated that return, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Secondly, we wish to refer to the financial situation of the Interim Administration, because we believe this to be a subject that deserves our consideration. We are referring to the delays and the difficulties in channelling those resources that were pledged during the Tokyo Conference - problems that could paralyse the Administration and jeopardize the credibility of the emerging institutions in Afghanistan. We trust that these delays and difficulties do not reflect a lack of commitment on the part of the international community.

Thirdly, a comment on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Colombia supports the proposed structure that has been submitted to us for consideration, and we are prepared to support a concise Security Council draft resolution endorsing this concept. As Ambassador Levitte has informed us, the draft resolution has already been prepared. We wish to emphasize nevertheless that UNAMA is an integrated mechanism that will have to coordinate many agencies and programmes free of any subordinate relationship. That will not necessarily be easy.

If in the future we achieve a real process of cooperation among the various intergovernmental organs of the United Nations, we may be able to produce decisions that make the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General easier. There is clearly a role for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, which we must identify and relate to the decisions that the Security Council will be taking on that structure.

Little time has elapsed since the establishment of the Interim Administration in December 2001. Nonetheless, in this brief period fundamental changes have occurred in Afghanistan's political structure that are encouraging. The report indicates the frankly overwhelming magnitude of the tasks ahead. That is why we believe it timely to revive the initiative of conducting a comprehensive assessment of the situation in that country. We feel that such a comprehensive assessment will be the best starting point for the new United Nations mission in Afghanistan. We should perhaps initiate that exercise some time in July. It should put the international community's role in a clear perspective and help the Security Council itself fully to grasp the most complex challenge that the United Nations faces in that region, which is particularly critical to international peace and security.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Cunningham (United States): I, too, wish to welcome you, Sir, to New York. Your presence here with us today is most welcome and signifies your country's commitment to Afghanistan. I want to completely associate the United States with your message of condolence and sympathy to the Afghan people in the aftermath of the earthquake today.

I also want to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her comprehensive overview of where we stand now. I think it is a very useful outline.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Afghanistan and the proposal for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We look forward to hearing other nations' views on UNAMA and to discussing it more fully in the coming days. For now, I want to second the Secretary-General's comment that what Ambassador Brahimi, his colleagues, the United Nations and, indeed, the international community have accomplished thus far is truly remarkable under the circumstances. We support the Secretary-General's intent to get an effective, efficient and integrated mission fully in place as soon as possible with a light expatriate footprint and heavy reliance on the Afghans themselves.

Today, I want to say a word about security. We all recognize that there is a variety of security challenges in Afghanistan today. The Afghans are addressing these challenges and the United States, together with others, is assisting them to do so in a number of ways. We will continue the campaign against Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Working with our international partners in the coming weeks, we will begin training a national army and the United States will contribute significantly to the training and equipping of police. In early April, we intend to meet with other interested countries to discuss efforts to improve the security situation in Afghanistan.

When the current mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) comes up for renewal, we will support its extension through December of this year. We will also provide assistance to Turkey should it, as we hope, agree to take over ISAF command from the United Kingdom. The United States is working, through its special forces and civil affairs teams, with local Afghan commanders and these teams will continue to help local commanders deal with contentious issues and to discourage conflict among them. We believe that these efforts are responsive to Afghanistan's needs and are already having a very positive impact.

Given the present security situation and the range and variety of assistance already available or under way, we do not currently see the need to expand ISAF's areas of activity beyond Kabul and its immediate environs. We remain extremely appreciative of the United Kingdom's leadership of the International Security Assistance Force and express our thanks for the support of the other troop-contributing nations.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are honoured and pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over this meeting to discuss issues relating to a great people and its country. This demonstrates your interest in and concern for Afghanistan, just as you have shown your interest in and concern for African affairs.

Allow me to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Afghanistan. We also wish to thank Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for her briefing on developments in that country. We believe that the report provides the Council with an important opportunity to assess and to discuss ways of improving the situation in Afghanistan, which has suffered more than 23 years of domestic and external conflicts and their consequences, affecting all aspects of life in that country. Any assessment and discussion of the United Nations role in this area require us to address the various issues with great patience and specificity, given the sensitivity of the situation.

We wish to express our satisfaction with the information contained in the report on the status of implementation of the Bonn Agreement and the establishment of the Afghan Interim Administration and its key commissions, which have had important political results. Notwithstanding the emergence of these embryonic political institutions in a turbulent political atmosphere, we believe that they have been tested and made significant strides in various aspects of national life, including education, the fight against illicit drugs, the participation of women and the convening of the Loya Jirga, which represents the core of the political process. Its success will dispel the threat of another war looming over that unhappy country.

With respect to Afghanistan, which has suffered for so long, I wish to associate myself with previous speakers in expressing our deep sorrow for the victims of the earthquakes in the northern regions of that country. On behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic, I convey our sincere condolences to the people and Government of friendly Afghanistan for the catastrophe and for their losses. We also wish to thank the Secretary-General, the specialized agencies and other relevant entities that have hastened to provide assistance to all the victims of the earthquake.

Security and stability in that country continue to be of major concern. Without the establishment of security, neither the peace process nor economic development and reconstruction can go forward. In this regard, we share the Secretary-General's concern over the ongoing instability of the security situation in many parts of Afghanistan, particularly outside major cities. This instability is caused by the persistence of pockets of Taliban and Al Qaeda resistance and by the continuing confrontation between political and military rivals.

We would like to express our regret that these confrontations have reached a level of ethnic violence between and among the different parties. The report notes many serious attacks on and violations of human rights based on ethnic motives. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation on making all efforts as soon as possible with the different Afghani leaders and their hesitant partners to participate in the political process. We also support his recommendations on training and equipping an Afghani security force under the Interim Administration, making all international efforts to set to rights the security situation currently dividing the various Afghani parties, and on deploying the Afghani security force efficiently and as soon as possible.

In this regard, we would like to note the wish of the Interim Administration and the Afghani people to expand the area of work of the International Security Assistance Force — ISAF — because of the sense of security achieved in the region. We believe that the Council should consider this issue seriously and give it the importance it deserves.

At the same time, we believe that a national army should be established as soon as possible, an army not based on ethnic criteria or any other affiliations. It should bear the responsibility for security of every part of Afghanistan, as prescribed by the Bonn Agreement. It should also be provided with all the logistical support it requires, because this is the least that we can give the Afghani people — international assistance that would enhance stability.

The report makes clear the importance of the continuation of humanitarian assistance and of proper coordination among various humanitarian agencies and institutions. Deep concern has been raised by the drought that has struck many areas, in addition to the disaster last night, and by the blocked roads in mountainous areas of Afghanistan, thus threatening great loss of life and requiring immediate measures to prevent such a catastrophe.

We express our great satisfaction with the pioneer girl students going back to school, raising hopes for a future of stability and normality.

We also express concern with regard to the information in the Secretary-General's report on poppy cultivation in the eastern and southern areas of Afghanistan in spite of the Interim Administration's efforts and issuance of an edict prohibiting the cultivation, production, processing or use of illicit drugs. They require international financial assistance that would dissuade different Afghani groups from considering illicit drugs as a major source of income. Of course, dealing with this issue requires a long time.

We support the information in the report on Afghanistan's need for enormous international financial assistance in the near future in order to meet current humanitarian needs and to begin the process of economic recovery.

The report states that current United Nations deployment in Afghanistan is not commensurate with the level of effort required and the role to be played in this game of the nation's future. Therefore, the proposal to erect a new structure of the United Nations presence in Afghanistan comes within the proper time frame and represents an urgent need for the Organization to play its role and to coordinate all of its efforts.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and his team for their arduous efforts in performing their difficult mandate. We hope that the composition of the new mission, as described by Ms. Fréchette, and in the manner presented by Ambassador Levitte, represents new hope towards strengthening all of Ambassador Brahimi's efforts and those of his team in Afghanistan. We believe that the Secretary-General's appointment of two very competent personalities to be Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and the fact that each chairs one of the two major components — political affairs, and relief, recovery and reconstruction — are very encouraging and raise hope that this mission will be able to coordinate among the various agencies and to carry out its mandate under Ambassador Brahimi's leadership in the best possible way.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

Ms. Tan (Singapore): At the outset, let me thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, for introducing the Secretary-General's latest report on the situation in Afghanistan, which is both informative and comprehensive.

Singapore is in full agreement with most of the points made in the report. A recurring motive in the Secretary-General's report is for Afghan priorities to lead the international community's efforts, and this should maximize the use of Afghan capacity. Indeed, Afghan voices should constantly guide our work here in the Council. However, it is imperative that all Afghans also work cohesively together and transcend ethnic and regional parochialism.

The international community has a unique opportunity to make good in Afghanistan. Similarly, Afghanistan has a singular chance to make the most of the international community's focused attention on it. Neither should squander the prospect.

It is also timely and appropriate for the Norwegian presidency to convene today's open debate to review developments in Afghanistan four months since the last such debate and three months since the inauguration of the Afghan Interim Authority and establishment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

We join others in expressing our condolences to the Afghan authorities and people for the thousands feared dead after a series of earthquakes struck northern Afghanistan last night and earlier today and in appealing for urgent humanitarian and other assistance to be extended.

Given the global interest in Afghanistan, it is especially important for Council members to listen regularly to the views of non-Council members, especially members of the "six plus two" group, which now meets in Kabul and includes Afghanistan and other key players, as we deliberate on the next steps, including the draft resolution referred to by France. The presence of the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Chair of the Afghan Support Group, will also provide an important dimension to the Council's work.

The Security Council has been intimately involved in developments in Afghanistan for many years. More recently, the Council has closely monitored and given the added push and support whenever necessary to affirm the United Nations central role in supporting the Afghan people's efforts in reinstating Afghanistan into the community of nations. The Council stands ready, as it declared in resolution 1383 (2001), to support the interim institutions established by the Bonn Agreement, as well as to support the implementation of the Agreement itself.

Singapore therefore looks forward to participating in the Council's discussion to establish the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan: a lean, unified and integrated United Nations structure, designed to support the various processes outlined in the Bonn Agreement.

It is clear from the participation in this open debate, and from the various complementary tracks — including the Tokyo donor's conference, which made an important contribution to securing the political process — that the Security Council is but one forum involved in the development of a global consensus on a coherent and comprehensive long-term strategy to bring peace to Afghanistan. Nonetheless, because of its responsibility under the Charter and its operational capability, the Security Council is perhaps best equipped to harness the collective and sustained political will to address the underlying causes and dynamics of the conflict in Afghanistan and to help the country's transition from war to peace. This, of course, does not preclude the Security Council from collaborating closely with all relevant partners to develop complementarity in our common endeavour.

With the help of the United Nations and the rest of the international community, Afghanistan has made huge strides in the right direction in many areas. The first stage of the three-step Bonn process has made headway in generating both domestic and international legitimacy for the Afghan Interim Authority. There is a growing sense of security in Kabul. The worst of the humanitarian crisis has been averted. There is a steady stream of Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries and internally displaced persons returning home. Nascent institutions have been re-established. Singapore has pledged, in addition to humanitarian assistance, a special five-year technical assistance package to train Afghans to help the most vulnerable groups in society, in particular women and children. However, despite progress in all of these areas, there is, as the Secretary-General noted, no room for complacency. Simple events that would be taken for granted in most parts of the world, such as Afghans celebrating the new year on 21 March and 1.5 million Afghan children returning to school last Saturday, hit the headlines and made front-page news precisely because of the depths to which Afghanistan had sunk.

Tensions bubble beneath the surface and constantly threaten to reverse the fragile and tentative progress that has been made. As we have learned from so many conflicts around the world, in order to be sustainable, any political or peace process must adopt a comprehensive and coherent approach. This is something that Singapore has long advocated, and it is an issue to which Colombia also referred.

Elements of progress on the political, humanitarian, reconstruction and security tracks are mutually reinforcing. While it is not necessary for progress on all of these tracks to proceed at the same pace, a critical lag on one of them could seriously jeopardize the entire process. In this regard, an urgent and pressing issue, which the Secretary-General has brought to our attention, is the security situation. We are grateful to the United Kingdom for its leadership in

establishing the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), as well as for the contribution of all the troop-contributing countries, which has brought a degree of calm to Kabul. ISAF has provided a crucial anchor, allowing the Afghan Interim Authority to extend its influence, especially to the provinces and outlying regions. However, while security and neutrality are being maintained in Kabul, there have been worrying reports of instability in other parts of Afghanistan, especially in the crucial period leading up to the emergency Loya Jirga.

As the recent activities of the international coalition demonstrate, Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters remaining in Afghanistan continue to pose a threat to the peace process. Important efforts have been made to establish an Afghan national army and police force. However, stopgap measures might be needed in the interim before both are brought to effective capacity. The Security Council should therefore examine all the instruments in its toolbox of actions to address this important question. Calibrating international assistance could be a powerful incentive for good behaviour. However, carrots must always be backed up by strong sticks. The Security Council must carefully examine how best to avoid any major armed conflict and provide security for the main transportation and trade routes.

Even as the international community's attention is focused on Afghanistan, we should not forget the interlinkages with the wider region. The generous rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts directed at Afghanistan should therefore have a regional focus, and should generate peace dividends for Afghanistan's neighbours, so that a vested interest in Afghanistan's stability can be developed. Similarly, it is important to remember that Afghanistan is but one of the many trouble spots in the world deserving of the world's attention and involvement. The big lesson of Afghanistan is that the fate of a distant country can have a global and catastrophic impact. The United Nations and the international community at large must therefore not repeat the mistakes of the past, but stay the course in their efforts in Afghanistan and elsewhere for the long term.

The President: I thank the representative of Singapore for the kind words she addressed to me.

Mr. Aguilar Zínser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like, first of all, to express my Government's condolences in connection with the loss of life and the other consequences of today's earthquake, which struck the Baghlan region of Afghanistan, in particular the city of Nahrin.

I would like to express my Government's satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, presiding over this meeting of the Security Council. Not only does your presence bear witness to your interest in the situation in Afghanistan, but it is a clear demonstration of the serious approach and sense of responsibility of your Government in participating in the work of the Security Council.

My Government would also like to associate itself with the satisfaction expressed by other members of the Council about the progress that has been made in recent months in the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan, and we commend all of those who have participated actively in that endeavour.

My Government believes, however, that the message delivered by Ms. Louise Fréchette contained a warning that we must heed. This is no time for complacency, because the task ahead of the international community and, in particular, the task that lies ahead for the Afghan people, is extremely difficult and complex. In this regard, two basic criteria must be taken into account. The first is that the efforts of the international community must be sustained. Past experience in the case of Afghanistan shows that any loss of sustained effort can give rise to a new cycle of problems, which the international community afterwards bemoans. The Security Council must thus ensure that the reconstruction effort under way in Afghanistan represents a commitment that must be fulfilled — an effort that will involve tasks being accomplished over time in a sustained fashion.

Secondly, my country believes that the task of reconstructing Afghanistan is fundamentally one of coordination among all international efforts by all the nations and organizations that have expressed their readiness to become involved. In this connection, we fully agree with the comments made earlier by Ms. Fréchette in identifying four major challenges that must immediately be met in a coordinated and concerted way. The first is, undoubtedly, the political integration of Afghanistan through the Loya Jirga process. We believe this to be the most vital task, on which the success of all the other tasks depends. Nothing can replace the will of the Afghan people

themselves in the reconstruction of their country, and nothing can help them to express their will better than a Government in which everyone can participate — a representative Government with the capacity to ensure that the rule of law prevails throughout Afghan territory.

Undoubtedly, the second topic, which other members of the Council have already referred to, is security in the country. The immediate task is to combine activities to demobilize combatants, form a new Afghan military force that represents the national interests, and form a national police whose peace-building efforts, my country wishes to emphasize, should have as one goal the eradication of the production and trafficking of narcotics. The production of drugs greatly underlies much of the violence and the sources of power in the interior of Afghanistan, and we must make an effort not to lose sight of the issue of combating the production and trafficking of narcotics in Afghanistan.

Thirdly, we believe that it is essential to pay due attention to humanitarian issues and not sidestep them. Giving appropriate attention to refugees and displaced persons will be a prerequisite for the stabilization of the country and the advancement of the Loya Jirga political process. It is fundamental that the Afghans recover control over their own communities and that they rebuild those communities in peace and achieve reconstruction on that basis. This must be done with full respect for human rights, promoting civil rights and freedoms in Afghanistan, including the equality of women, which is a very important element. We believe that many difficulties lie ahead in the achievement of these goals, and unfortunately there will be many causes of frustration in the future.

Finally, we believe that all these measures must also be part of great sustained efforts at economic and social development through the appropriate use of resources and the creation of national capacities in order to make proper use of these resources.

All of these are fundamental tasks that are, above all, in the hands of the Afghans themselves. I emphasize that the international community cannot in any way replace the will and the commitment of the Afghan people regarding their own political process and the reconstruction of their country. It is up to the international community to motivate, support and lend coherence and content to the efforts of the Afghan people.

In this regard, the United Nations Mission — for which a concrete proposal has already been made to us by the Secretariat, to be reflected in a resolution that, as the Ambassador of France has pointed out, is now being prepared — must be designed with a very clear idea of combining efforts and producing a real model partnership among all the many agencies of the United Nations system that are participating in the task of reconstructing Afghanistan, so that in the short term their work can be made more effective. That Mission must also be inspired by the capacity and the skill of the international community to transfer, as soon as possible, all the development responsibilities to the Afghan institutions that emerge as part of the economic and social consolidation process. We hope that the resolution being drafted will adequately reflect the mandate for achieving these objectives.

May I conclude by emphasizing once again that the reconstruction of Afghanistan will not be at all easy. The present momentum augurs well. The Security Council, therefore, must see to it that that momentum is maintained.

The President: I thank the representative of Mexico for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): My delegation welcomes your presence today, Sir, and we thank you for presiding over today's meeting. Our thanks also go to Ms. Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General, for her briefing and her introduction of the report of the Secretary-General.

Like other delegations, my delegation would like to express its condolences to and solidarity with the Afghan people, who have suffered great losses from the earthquake.

In his report, the Secretary-General gives a full analysis of the present situation in Afghanistan, and we agree with that analysis. Since the signing of the Bonn Agreement, the political process in that country has gained headway, and there have been some important changes in Afghan society. The Interim Administration has made some important decisions and decrees since its inauguration. The Special Independent Commission is making is making preparations for the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga. As a new school year has begun, a large number of school dropouts — including

girls, who for the first time in six years are able to receive education — are going back to school. The situation of women has been improved.

Through cooperation with United Nations agencies, the Governments concerned and relevant non-governmental organizations, Afghanistan is setting the stage for resuming agricultural activities and starting economic reconstruction. It is improving its relations with its neighbours. We congratulate the country on the hard-won achievements that it has made within a short period of time. The relevant agencies of the United Nations system, and especially the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team, have all made important contributions to achieving progress in Afghanistan. We would like to express our great appreciation to Mr. Brahimi and his team for their effective efforts in difficult conditions for peace and economic reconstruction in the country.

On the other hand, the overall situation, especially the state of security in the country, remains rather fragile. The eradication of the Taliban and Al Qaeda remnants, the promotion of reconciliation and confidence among different ethnic groups and putting an end to the partition and military conflicts among warlords and armed groups are all difficult challenges facing the country. Especially with the coming of the Loya Jirga, people are worried about the possible outbreak of new conflicts triggered by the distribution of power.

The Secretary-General's report contains a thorough analysis of the security situation. He has also produced pertinent recommendations and observations. We support those recommendations, including the extension of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and its appropriate expansion.

In his report, the Secretary-General focuses on the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and he details his ideas about its mandate and structure. We believe that given the current circumstances, it is necessary and timely to establish such an integrated and unified structure, which will synchronize the various assistance initiatives of the United Nations, so that together these combined initiatives will lend stronger support for the peace process of Afghanistan. We support the establishment of UNAMA and hope that the Security Council will adopt a resolution on this, so that the Assistance Mission can be established and put into operation in a timely fashion.

As a neighbour of Afghanistan, China has always been committed to the full settlement of the Afghan question, and we actively support the Bonn process. Since the establishment of the Interim Administration, China has reopened its embassy in Kabul and has provided emergency assistance. Our assistance in cash has been disbursed, and the first shipment of material assistance, which mainly consists of badly needed medical equipment and school supplies, has arrived in Kabul.

The Chinese Government is working in coordination with the Interim Administration and with Germany on the training of the Afghan police force. China has signed an agreement with the Afghan authorities to provide 20,000 police uniforms, 50,000 pair of military boots and other clothing. A comprehensive assistance team assembled from more than 10 departments in China has arrived in Kabul; it will coordinate with its Afghan counterparts on reconstruction assistance, and on the building of hospitals. We are willing to work with other concerned countries to make our own contribution towards the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The President: I thank the representative of China for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Ngoh Ngoh (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by expressing Cameroon's most sincere condolences to the Afghan people on the earthquake that has devastated the country, claiming numerous victims.

My country also welcomes your presence among us, Mr. Minister, which clearly illustrates the importance that your country and the international community attach to the situation in Afghanistan. I thank Ms. Louise Fréchette for her comprehensive briefing, and the Secretary-General for his report (S/2002/278).

My delegation welcomes the positive developments in the political situation in Afghanistan, in particular the gradual implementation of the Bonn Agreement. The Interim Authority, established on 22 December 2001, has begun its work and has drafted a road map for the development of Afghanistan. It has also set up the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga, whose work

is already well under way. The Interim Administration has also begun to establish other institutions provided for under the Bonn Agreement: the Civil Service, Judicial and Human Rights Commissions. In that regard, we welcome the organization of a national workshop on human rights at Kabul on 9 March 2002, in which the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights participated.

In spite of the praiseworthy progress made, the fact remains that the security situation continues to be a major source of concern. The existence of the vestiges of Taliban and terrorist forces, clashes between political and military factions, inter-clan and inter-ethnic violence and banditry all make the situation outside Kabul unstable and precarious. We welcome the positive role played in Afghanistan by the International Security Assistance Force. We support its expansion to other major urban centres, as recommended by the Secretary-General in paragraph 126 of his report, in order to reduce the chances of an outbreak of hostilities among armed factions. We also agree with the Secretary-General's view on the need to give priority to the creation of an effective Afghan security force and a genuinely multi-ethnic and apolitical Afghan army.

The humanitarian situation also continues to be very worrisome, and has worsened with the recent earthquake. We welcome the praiseworthy efforts that have been made in this regard by United Nations agencies, humanitarian organizations and various countries. We call on donor countries to resolutely support the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People, which includes projects aimed at responding to urgent humanitarian needs and addresses the country's rehabilitation and reconstruction.

My delegation supports the comments and recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on the creation of a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which would be based on two pillars, namely, political affairs on the one hand and relief, recovery and reconstruction on the other. We believe the mission will play a very important role, especially in ensuring coordination and consistency among various activities. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should be included as needed in the establishment of this structure.

My delegation would also like to pay tribute to the activities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan, Ambassador Brahimi, as well as to the entire United Nations team in the field.

The President: I thank the representative of Cameroon for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I thank you for honouring us with your presence here today, Mr. Minister, to preside over the Security Council.

I too wish to extend to the Afghan people the condolences of the people of Bulgaria over the loss of human life caused by the earthquake in the north-eastern part of the country.

I thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2002/278). I also thank Ms. Fréchette for introducing the report, and for giving us additional useful information.

Bulgaria fully supports the statement soon to be made by Spain on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore confine myself to a few brief comments in my national capacity.

If the Afghan people's prospects are brighter today — something that was not expected only six months ago — it is due in large part to the efforts, determination and courage of the anti-terrorist coalition led by the United States. The struggle against terrorism, in which Bulgaria is proud to participate, continues today. Its success will also determine the success of reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. The United Nations has a full role to play in those efforts, and we are very grateful to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and his team, for the remarkable work they have accomplished thus far.

I would like, at the outset, to say that my country fully supports the Secretary-General's approach to the structure of a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and in particular his intention to rely on the talents of the Afghan people for the work of the mission.

We share the view that the question of security remains of primary importance for the recovery of Afghanistan. The International Security Assistance

Force (ISAF), which includes a Bulgarian contingent, plays a key role in that regard. We believe that it would be appropriate for ISAF's mandate to be extended after the initial six months. I take this opportunity to thank the United Kingdom once again for its effective leadership of ISAF. The extension of ISAF's mandate would be an expression of the international community's commitment to the Afghan people. In our view, a careful approach is necessary with regard to ISAF's territorial expansion beyond Kabul. Such expansion must take place in tandem with the process of establishing an Afghan national army and police force.

Bulgaria welcomes the progress made in the area of human rights in Afghanistan. Among the events organized in Kabul in March, we should like to note the commemoration of International Women's Day and the first national workshop on human rights. It must be pointed out, however, that disturbing information has been reported concerning acts of ethnic intolerance and repression that require increased vigilance on the part of the international community.

We share the opinion of the Secretary-General, expressed in his 28 February letter to Member States, concerning the urgent need to deliver humanitarian aid, which has been made even more important by yesterday's earthquake. In response to the appeal launched, Bulgaria has done its best to speed the humanitarian assistance that we pledged at the Tokyo donor Conference in January.

The fight against drug trafficking is of major importance for the future of Afghanistan. The eradication of illicit drugs requires a coherent programme that ensures the participation of the rural population. My country is directly affected by that traffic, because it lies directly on the path of illicit drugs that flow from Afghanistan to users in Europe and elsewhere.

Plans for recovery in Afghanistan require optimal balance and coordination among the various forms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. My country is mobilizing its own potential in order to participate actively in Afghanistan's recovery.

The President: I thank the representative of Bulgaria for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): Welcome to New York and to the Security Council, Mr. Foreign Minister. Your presence here, and that of the Deputy Secretary-General, who briefed us earlier this morning, are ample testimony to Afghanistan's importance for the United Nations. I hope your presence and your conduct of this meeting will help get that message out. We in the British Mission are hearing it with particular immediacy, as a member of our staff is currently serving on temporary duty at the British Embassy in Kabul.

I will be as brief as I can, not least because, as Ambassador Tafrov has said, the representative of Spain will be speaking later in the debate on behalf of the European Union; I associate myself entirely with that statement.

At the outset, I should like to associate myself with all those who have expressed condolences to the Interim Administration of Afghanistan and to the Afghan people at the earthquake which has occurred in the north of the country. As the Deputy Secretary-General said, the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was asked by the Interim Administration to assist and was authorized earlier today to deploy a team to the disaster area. The team includes representatives of ISAF and of the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as representatives of the United Kingdom Department for International Development. They deployed by helicopter and are currently expected to report back to donors and agencies at another meeting in Kabul this evening. A follow-up donors' coordination meeting will take place tomorrow morning. Meanwhile, ISAF is assisting the United Nations Development Programme in establishing an operations room in Kabul.

We very much welcome the Secretary-General's report on Afghanistan (S/2002/278). It is very clear to us that the Special Representative and his colleagues have achieved a very great deal in a short space of time. We will certainly work with the French delegation to ensure that the draft resolution that they are preparing is adopted quickly and expeditiously.

The formal establishment of a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) will be a crucial element of support for the Bonn process, and we very much welcome the unified, integrated structure that is envisaged. It is important that the political and reconstruction efforts of the United Nations be closely coordinated, for, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, good reconstruction helps political stability.

UNAMA should also aim to increase Afghan capacity and should pursue a human-rights-oriented and gender-sensitive approach. It is also important, as others have said, that we not lose sight of the fact that there is still a major humanitarian problem in Afghanistan. Much will still depend on the efforts of local Afghan staff, and we very much agree with the Secretary-General that what they have done in distributing aid thus far has been heroic. Fast and effective delivery of aid is essential in giving the Interim Administration the support it needs.

We also welcome the profile that the Secretary-General has given to the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance. For some time, the United Kingdom has been a strong supporter of the mine action effort in Afghanistan, both in terms of finance and otherwise. Mine action is sometimes overlooked in dealing with the various crises on the Council's agenda, as our intervention in the 15 March debate on the protection of civilians made clear. We anticipate seeing forward planning to deal with the landmines problem taking place within the wider framework of reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Appropriate sequencing and prioritization of mine clearance activities will be important points in that respect.

We also hope that the Council's deliberations on the protection of civilians are very much borne in mind as UNAMA is established. Here, I would like to point to the importance, relevance and usefulness of the aide-memoire and presidential statement adopted by the Council on that occasion as we plan future work on Afghanistan. It is very important that the protection of civilians be mainstreamed into the activities of the Secretariat and of the Council.

We would also be interested to hear whether the Secretary-General foresees a role in Afghanistan for the internally displaced persons unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), since there is very obviously a major problem with regard to internally displaced persons. It would be very helpful if Assistant Secretary-General Türk were able to give us some indication of the Secretariat's thinking on that issue as he wraps up the debate.

It is also clear that the role of donor groups, such as the Afghan Support Group, will remain very important as the Council takes forward its work on Afghanistan. We need to ensure that the work of the Afghan Support Group can inform and strengthen the emerging coordination and integration of structures in UNAMA.

On the political side, it is essential that the Emergency Loya Jirga be successful, with agreement on a more representative Transitional Administration as part of the Bonn process. We very much welcome the support that the United Nations has given to the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga. That effort deserves wider international support and recognition.

Security has, quite rightly, been a major issue in the discussion thus far. ISAF has helped to maintain security in and around Kabul. I am sure it is the sense of all Council members that its mandate should be extended beyond June, and I would like to send that clear political message now. We also accept the importance of spreading the ISAF effect outside Kabul, although, as Ambassador Levitte and others have made clear, expansion of the Force's area of operation looks difficult. It is clear that the future stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan, and the return of refugees, will depend on adequate security, so we will need to give careful consideration to how the ISAF effect might be encouraged to take root throughout the country.

Training of the Afghan police and army will be an essential element of this, and we need to help the Afghan authorities with the development of their own structures. The focus needs to be on security sector reform, and we very much welcome the meeting of interested donors next month, to which Ambassador Cunningham and others have referred.

Finally, I should like to mention the problem of narcotics, as Ambassador Wehbe and Ambassador Aguilar Zínser have done before me. There is an urgent need to tackle this problem. Recent announcements by the Interim Administration have been a very positive start. But the opium harvest begins next month. The international community should provide financial and political support to ensure that the poppy crop is destroyed and that the product does not find its way onto the international drugs market. This is a vital issue for all of us, and I make no apology for leaving the Council with that final thought.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): May I thank you, Mr. Minister, for presiding over our deliberations today at this public meeting of the Council on Afghanistan. I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for her comprehensive briefing.

The Government and the people of Ireland are deeply saddened at reports this morning of another devastating earthquake in northern Afghanistan. We extend our condolences to the Afghan authorities and people. We greatly appreciate the tremendous efforts being made by relief agencies to provide rapid assistance in the affected area.

My delegation associates itself fully with the statement to be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

Afghanistan, as the Secretary-General says in his report before the Council, is a shattered society. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of its people desperately want peace, security and a new beginning.

It is a notable feature of the Secretary-General's assessment of the challenges now facing Afghanistan that no effort is made to portray the situation as other than it is: real promise matched by real opportunities, but also accompanied by formidable and daunting challenges for all of us — the people of Afghanistan, the United Nations, the entire international community.

For this honesty and clarity of focus, Ireland is deeply grateful to the Secretary-General and to Special Representative Brahimi.

It may occasionally be possible to lose sight of the magnitude of the United Nations achievement in Afghanistan over recent months and of the scale of the challenge which the United Nations and others involved are now addressing. In this respect, one statistic cited today by the Deputy Secretary-General should confirm the reality to all of us. Over the coming months, food assistance will be provided to a staggering total of 8.8 million people. We can all be genuinely gratified by the work of our Secretary-General and his colleagues. The case of Afghanistan surely proves that an effective, well-supported United Nations is unquestionably indispensable to the world today.

It is Ireland's clear and unambiguous conviction that the international community, the Council and the United Nations as a whole must now assume our full obligations in supporting the Secretary-General's proposals, which he has placed before us, on how the United Nations can help the people of Afghanistan to reweave the shredded fabric of their country. This is not only because of implications for international peace and security — although these, of course, exist — but because we can truly do no less: it is now time, as Abraham Lincoln said of the tasks facing America after a terrible Civil War, to bind up a nation's wounds. That is what the proposals in this report of the Secretary-General really amount to.

The Secretary-General rightly describes the remarkable progress made in Afghanistan since the Bonn Agreement and the subsequent establishment of the Interim Authority, under the leadership of Chairman Karzai. The Cabinet has been formed and meets; work has substantially started on an interim budget; and a back-to-school campaign is very happily under way. Across the range of issues, in summary, a good beginning has been made.

At the same time, the Secretary-General rightly asks difficult questions regarding those elements that may continue to seek to disrupt the building of peace in Afghanistan. It is essential, as he says, that the Government be able to extend its authority throughout the territory of Afghanistan; that it enhance its legitimacy; and that it reinforce the importance of central authority, particularly in the lead-up to the emergency Loya Jirga due to be convened by 22 June.

Just three months remain until the convening of that forum. All in Afghanistan must cooperate with the Loya Jirga Commission, which has performed exceptionally well over the first two months of its existence. We are, of course, concerned at reports of attempts to exercise influence on the Commission, and we hope that all will assist in ensuring that the Commission can continue to operate unhindered. The extension of real stability throughout the country will be critical in this regard.

As the Secretary-General asserts, stability and security are essential to the success of the activities of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of those contributing to the International Security Assistance Force in consolidating the stability of Kabul and its surrounds, permitting the return of substantial numbers of United Nations and other relief and reconstruction personnel. We hope the United Nations will gradually be able to

begin deployment of civilian personnel throughout the country to address the still-acute humanitarian needs of the Afghan population. We remain extremely concerned at continued reports of insecurity hampering the delivery of assistance in several parts of the country.

The Secretary-General outlines in clear and specific detail the proposed structure for the United Nations presence in Afghanistan: the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). It is imperative that the integrated mission approach, which rightly builds on the lessons learned from past United Nations operations, be given real shape on the ground. It is also vitally important that all elements of the United Nations system cooperate in every respect with the Secretary-General and with Mr. Brahimi in making this carefully calculated approach work with maximum positive effect.

My delegation feels that the appointment, at the regional level, of designated representatives of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General is essential to the coherence and coordination of the United Nations Mission. Special Representative Brahimi has stressed throughout the past months that UNAMA should have the lightest possible international footprint. This is a strong phrase, and Mr. Brahimi is surely right. For this reason, we hope that all efforts will be made to ensure that the numbers of international staff are kept to the effective minimum. Afghan ownership of the relief and reconstruction process is essential to the long-term stability of the country.

I very much support the strong emphasis placed earlier by Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette in the area of human rights. Ireland is very concerned that human rights should continue to be placed at the forefront of United Nations efforts in Afghanistan. We were extremely gratified by the human rights workshop held earlier this month and attended by High Commissioner for Human Rights Robinson, marking International Women's Day, and by the Afghan working groups that have flowed from it.

We are enormously gratified by the profoundly positive transformation of the circumstances of women and girls in Afghanistan due to the successful developments of the past six months.

Given the very substantive successes to date of the Loya Jirga Commission, we look forward now to early progress on the creation of a human rights commission, which, as the Secretary-General notes, will greatly enhance the United Nations capacity to fulfil its role in developing a comprehensive human rights programme.

The reports of continuing human rights abuses, particularly directed at ethnic Pashtuns, remain extremely worrying. Such abuses are unacceptable, and the Interim Authority and all the elements that compose its membership, as well as the United Nations mission, must work together to ensure full adherence to human rights norms. Human rights violations of this kind can only contribute to a further refugee crisis and serve to exacerbate instability in parts of Afghanistan. By contrast, we are heartened by the very positive reports regarding the return of refugees from Pakistan and look forward to the extension of the facilitated return programme to Iran next month.

The beginning of the new school year in Afghanistan over the past few days is a powerful symbol of how much has changed in Afghanistan in just six months. We especially welcome the return of women and girls to the education system, while recognizing that almost all young Afghans have lost several vital years of education. Though conditions may remain less than ideal for some time, we appreciate the tremendous work that has been done by Afghan and international authorities and donors to make possible the opening of so many schools in time.

Ireland, along with others, has made substantial commitments to both relief and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. Ireland contributed over €5 million in 2001 in humanitarian assistance. At Tokyo, we pledged €12 million over 3 years in reconstruction assistance. This is in addition to humanitarian aid. In 2002, we expect to exceed the level of humanitarian aid given in 2001. We welcome the most recent statements by Foreign Minister Abdullah confirming the commitment of the Afghan Interim Authority to giving the highest priority to drug control. The setting up of a drug-control unit in the Interior Ministry, as well as a State high commission on drug control, are positive steps in this regard.

The recommendations of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan are both wise and also carefully considered in their detail. Ireland wholeheartedly

endorses them. We will play our full part in helping bring them to reality. None of us can do any less.

The President: I thank the representative of Ireland for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to see presiding over the Security Council the Foreign Minister of Norway, a State that is not only a neighbour here in the Council, but also a geographical neighbour of Russia with which we have the friendliest of relations in the political, trade, economic and other areas.

We join in the sincere condolences that have been expressed to the people and Government of Afghanistan over the earthquake in the northern parts of that country, which took a great toll in human life.

We are grateful to Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for her participation in today's meeting and for the report she introduced on the situation in Afghanistan, which provides a good basis for our discussion.

For many years, the Council considered the situation in Afghanistan from the perspective of confronting the Taliban regime, which supported international terrorism, encouraged the production of and illicit trade in narcotic drugs, destroyed the historical and cultural landmarks of Afghanistan, flagrantly violated human rights and unleashed an open civil war against its own people. Fortunately, those dark days in the lives of Afghans are over. Thanks to the collective efforts of the international community, including the United Nations, the power of the Taliban movement has crumbled and the country has entered a new era in its life.

Like many Members of the United Nations, we eagerly looked forward to the proposals on the new role to be played by the United Nations in Afghanistan's post-conflict recovery. We agree with the assessment made in the Secretary-General's report of the current situation in the country and the stress placed on the various fields in which the United Nations is to play a leadership role.

We support the recommendation on the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which, under the guidance of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, will be responsible for ensuring that all forms of United Nations assistance — political, human rights, law enforcement, gender equality, emergency assistance, economic rehabilitation and reconstruction — are designed to restore a peaceful existence for the Afghan people. The proposed structure and size of the Mission is, on the one hand, to ensure effective international participation in the recovery of Afghanistan and, on the other, to provide first and foremost for the active participation of Afghans themselves in the rebirth of their country.

During the course of the recent visit to Moscow of the head of the Interim Administration, Mr. Karzai, and his negotiations with President Putin and Foreign Minister Ivanov of Russia, we expressed our support for the efforts of the Afghan authorities, under United Nations auspices, to normalize the situation in the country, to establish Government institutions at the central and local levels and to restore social and economic infrastructure. Emphasis was placed on the importance of consistent compliance with the provisions of the Bonn Agreement, which has become the starting point for the formation of a stable Afghan State and civil society. Following Mr. Karzai's visit to Moscow, 17 memorandums were signed on cooperation between ministries and agencies, representatives of Russian business circles and the Afghan side. These memorandums relate fundamentally to the construction and restoration of petroleum and gas infrastructure, energy installations and the delivery of Russian agricultural vehicles, industrial equipment and various other types of machinery to Afghanistan.

We value the important role of the international community and of Norway, heading the Afghanistan Assistance Coordination Authority, in providing humanitarian assistance to that country. In the course of the first phase of humanitarian operations, Russia has also made its own contribution, providing direct assistance of over $12 million to Afghanistan. We are now preparing a project for providing assistance during the second phase.

We are pleased that peaceful life in Afghanistan is gradually being established. Afghans have begun to go to the movies and museums; girls and boys are attending schools; hospitals are opening.

The political process is also gaining momentum. Active preparations are under way for the pan-Afghan Loya Jirga in June, which will elect a Transitional Authority. We believe it important to emphasize once

again that, in preparing for convening the Loya Jirga, it is essential to ensure that the representatives of the Taliban and their followers have no place in future State institutions.

The most serious problem today is the problem of ensuring security in Afghanistan. We regularly receive reports on emerging hotbeds of conflict, in which the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorist groups are active. We are especially concerned by the presence of a large number of foreign mercenaries, including Chechens, among the terrorists.

We attach great importance to the activities of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in compliance with the mandate adopted by the Security Council in resolution 1386 (2001). We believe that ISAF is playing an important role in ensuring calm in Kabul, allowing the Interim Administration to work effectively. Obviously, questions relating to the activities of the Force under resolution 1386 (2001) must be coordinated with the Afghan authorities. If its mandate must be prolonged or expanded, the Security Council must be willing to consider doing so, bearing in mind the requests of the acting authorities in Afghanistan.

In the long term, as we see it, we must emphasize the establishment of a strictly Afghan army. In this connection, we would point to the onset of training, with the active participation of ISAF, for the first battalion of the National Guard. We welcome Germany's readiness to lead the training of the Afghan police force. In the course of the visits of the Ministers of Defence and Internal Affairs of Afghanistan to Moscow in February and March, the Russian side expressed its readiness to develop military and technical cooperation, with participation in the building of national armed forces and the establishment of law enforcement bodies.

Clearly, the establishment of armed forces and issues pertaining to the recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan — as well as all other areas of international cooperation in helping that country — require the most serious coordination of effort. It would be absolutely unacceptable for the territory of Afghanistan to become the arena of rivalry, competition or struggle among the various interests. If that should occur, the opportunity for a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan may once again be squandered.

We trust that the United Nations will assume a central role in establishing broad international cooperation in post-conflict Afghanistan and in coordinating all international efforts to assist that country.

In this connection, we attach great significance to UNAMA's work. Russian specialists who have the necessary experience are prepared to take a most active part in the Mission's activities. We have given our concrete proposals relating to this area to the Secretariat, and we expect operative replies to them.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Minister, we are pleased to see you here in New York, presiding over this important Security Council meeting on the situation in Afghanistan, and I would like to express my delegation's appreciation for the serious and effective way in which your delegation has led our Council's work this month.

On behalf of Guinea, I would also like to join other delegations in conveying our condolences to the Afghan people and Government following the earthquake that took place in the northern part of the country. We would like to thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of the report and for the additional information Ms. Louise Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General has given us.

I would also like to commend Mr. Jean Arnault and Mr. Nigel Fisher on their appointments as Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, dealing respectively with political affairs and with humanitarian and development affairs. We wish them every success in carrying out their mission.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the successes of the Interim Authority in the implementation of the political process resulting from the Bonn Agreement. This shows the Afghan people's determination to emerge from 23 years of a war that has left deep scars. We encourage the Afghan authorities to continue their actions in order to conclude national reconciliation, democratization, stabilization and restoration of the country. The back-to-school campaign has registered significant progress, with the return of children to schools in Kabul on 23 March. We followed this event with relief, especially the return of young girls to school.

We would like to thank all of those who in various forms have contributed to the establishment of a basis for viable development in Afghanistan. We expressly convey our gratitude to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for the return of calm to Kabul and its environs, as well as to those countries that are ensuring training and equipment for the army and police in order to consolidate the indigenous security sector.

The success of the political process so methodically embarked upon depends on the restoration of a climate of security throughout the country, for the continuation of acts of banditry and rivalry among factions trying to achieve power, pockets of resistance of the Al Qaeda forces and the Taliban and repeated violations of human rights are all factors that destabilize and threaten peace.

In my delegation's view, the restoration of peace and security should enable the Afghan authorities to embark upon the reconstruction of the country, with the assistance of the international community. In this context, my delegation once again appeals to donors to quickly make good on their pledges of contributions made during the Tokyo International Conference. The recovery of Afghanistan will depend largely on this, in view of the immense and urgent needs felt in all areas.

If some difficulties have been overcome, as is pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, we still note that the humanitarian crisis, particularly the food crisis, remains a concern. In such circumstances, we still need time and additional financial resources to cope with this. In this connection, humanitarian agencies in the field should mobilize further in order to bring increased assistance to refugees returning from neighbouring countries, as well as to displaced persons.

My delegation believes that these activities should go hand in hand with the continuation and broadening of the mine clearance programme. This would facilitate the implementation of development projects that would have a speedy impact to the benefit of the people.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to encourage the rapid and effective establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. This would be the best way to consolidate our achievements and to continue the implementation of the Bonn Agreement in a harmonious and integrated manner.

My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Levitte for the draft resolution now being prepared and would like here and now to express our great interest in this initiative.

The President: I thank the representative of Guinea for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Gokool (Mauritius): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I express our deepest sympathy to and solidarity with the Government and people of Afghanistan for their losses suffered as a result of the devastating earthquake in the north of the country.

Let me join others in thanking the Secretary-General for the very comprehensive and detailed report and Ms. Fréchette for her statement this morning.

Mr. President, your chairing this meeting today signifies how much Norway takes to heart the peace process in Afghanistan. We are very grateful for this.

Mauritius fully supports the recommendations and observations made in the report. As observed in its paragraph 116, we must set realistic and achievable objectives, which we can attain only through genuine commitment and determination. We agree that Afghanistan now has the chance at least to be a country at peace with its neighbours and itself. We must, however, strive hard to translate this into reality.

Among other things, two important ingredients for the success of reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes are, first, the readiness of the Afghans themselves to assume responsibility for rebuilding their country, and, secondly, the continued effort and commitment of the international community. Reading through the report, my delegation has no doubt that both ingredients are adequately expressed. We appreciate the majestic strides made towards normalcy and peace by the Interim Administration.

We also appreciate the preparatory work for the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga, which would pave the way for a broad-based multi-ethnic, multi-religious representative assembly for a united Afghanistan.

We support the proposal for a single mission, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which will bring all humanitarian and reconstruction activities under one umbrella.

Like other delegations, we too believe that the challenges of UNAMA will be multifaceted and

complex. Any shortcoming or delay in the implementation process of the plan would reverse all achievements. Complacency, procrastination and unnecessary delays in extending the pledges of support, financial or otherwise, would be a real impediment. We must at all cost avoid the effects of the domino theory and start putting all efforts into the reconstruction of Afghanistan, which could take many, many years to complete.

In this regard, we have just asked ourselves what the priorities should be. I would like to enumerate four of these. The first priority is security assurance. As the report mentions in paragraph 45, the unstable security situation in certain parts of the country remains a very worrying factor. A stable and peaceful life cannot be possible in a country where the threat of violence and ethnic rivalry prevails. Recent incidents in Afghanistan prove once again how dangerous it would be for the international community to operate without assured security. The Interim Administration is trying to build its capacity for providing peace and security to the Afghan people.

To meet Afghanistan's immediate needs, my delegation fully supports the proposal for an expanded International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), an extended mandate as suggested by Chairman Karzai. Any effort to address the immediate concerns of Afghanistan without prioritizing the security aspect would fail to produce the desired results.

Secondly, the reconciliation process should not be delayed. The clashes between Afghan political leaders in certain provinces are matters of real concern. No political advancement towards a broad-based and representative Government in Afghanistan will be possible if ethnic rivalries are left unchecked. We must ensure that the establishment of the emergency Loya Jirga will give due consideration to ethnic and regional differences and will help accommodate the parties in a fair and equitable manner.

Thirdly, I would like to associate myself with the comments of other delegations concerning the question of narcotic drugs and drug trafficking, which should be urgently addressed. The pre-assessment survey of opium poppy cultivation conducted by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme confirms earlier indications that cultivation has resumed at a relatively high level throughout the country, after the considerable decline in 2001. As terrorism exploits the drug trade, the international community should take prompt action in this regard. We welcome the decree passed on 22 December by the Interim Administration banning the cultivation, production, processing, use of and trafficking in illicit drugs. We hope that the restructured Afghan police will effectively deal with that problem.

Fourthly, with regard to humanitarian concerns, no political process will succeed in bringing about stability and peace in Afghanistan if the humanitarian situation is not addressed in the right way and at the right time. The plight of refugees and displaced persons must be given the consideration that it deserves. More than 20 per cent of the Afghan population has been displaced; the poverty rate is increasing at an alarming pace; food distribution to the needy in the affected areas is uneven; and blatant abuses of human rights, especially those of women and children, have rent the social fabric of the country. My delegation feels that it is high time for the international community to focus its efforts on seeking appropriate solutions to the humanitarian problems. We welcome the proposal to confer responsibility for relief, recovery and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan on the Deputy Special Representative, to whom we wish every success in this regard.

We believe that the international community's efforts in Afghanistan should lead to durable results. It is the belief of my delegation that in our efforts we must ensure that the Afghan reality is kept fully in view.

Finally, I would like to stress that national prosperity is furthered not by war but by peace, and that it is not to be found in opposition or confrontation, but in cooperation. It is a positive-sum game, in which all the parties win. The partnership between the international community and the Afghan people represents a leap forward, and this process needs to be further promoted in order successfully to realize programmes to rebuild Afghanistan. We hope that international multilateral and bilateral donors will continue to contribute to the development of Afghanistan.

The President: I thank the representative of Mauritius for the kind words he addressed to me.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Norway.

Like previous speakers, I would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette for her briefing and for the comprehensive report. This debate clearly shows that the United Nations is on the right track in Afghanistan. I warmly commend the work of the Special Representative and his staff. I can assure Mr. Brahimi and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) of Norway's continued support, both in the Council and in the Afghan Support Group, which we are chairing.

We only have to look back a few months to recall the remarkable progress that has been achieved. We have seen the fall of the Taliban, which, with its repressive fundamentalism and its support for terrorism, led Afghanistan into international isolation. It was a regime which had no regard for the suffering of millions of Afghans under its misrule.

In December, the Bonn Agreement created a representative interim leadership, which is demonstrating its responsibility in returning Afghanistan to peace and stability. The Security Council responded in January by lifting the sanctions on the country, while tightening the measures against the Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorists. Only three months into the term of the Interim Authority, led by Hamid Karzai, the future for the Afghan people looks more hopeful than it has for a very long time.

Last weekend, at the start of the Afghan new year, schools were reopened. Now girls too are allowed to learn, and women allowed to teach, for the first time in years. Kabul is peaceful, its people displaying the dignity that the Taliban sought to deny them. In other cities and areas around the country, too, life is returning to normal.

I warmly commend the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for the role it is playing. Norway is proud to provide troops to ISAF under the able command of the United Kingdom. We look forward to continuing under a new leadership. Norway will work with Council members to ensure the timely extension of ISAF's mandate beyond June.

A humanitarian disaster, which seemed to be under way last autumn, has been averted. Relief aid is now reaching most of the needy. Our thanks go to all the women and men involved — often at great personal risk — in this effort. As chair of the Afghan Support Group, Norway will continue to work with other donors, the United Nations mission and the Interim Authority to improve the coordination of aid and to increase access to remote areas.

Let there be no doubt: many challenges still lie ahead. Terrorists and the Taliban still pose a threat to the peace and the political process. The recent combat operations conducted by coalition forces against Al Qaeda supporters testify to this.

Norway is proud to provide personnel to the counter-terrorism campaign in Afghanistan. We will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the United States and other coalition partners in fighting global terrorism. We will work to ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a base for terrorists.

To succeed, the Interim Authority must extend its influence beyond Kabul, to all parts of Afghanistan. Public services must be improved. The Loya Jirga must be supported. This will require increased international assistance. More funds are needed for the Interim Authority to pay salaries and to function as an administration. Norway has paid $6 million to the United Nations Development Programme trust fund. We call on donors to help find the funds that Mr. Brahimi has asked for.

Measures are needed also to ensure that the security situation continues to improve. Norway is contributing to the international efforts under way to support the establishment of national Afghan police and security forces. I welcome the lead taken by Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom and others in this regard.

Recovery and reconstruction must be undertaken with a view to underpinning long-term prospects for peace and political progress. Norway looks forward to working with the Afghan authorities and donors, including through the Implementation Group, to make concrete and constructive use of the assistance pledged at the Tokyo Conference.

As agreed at the Afghan Support Group meeting in Geneva earlier this month, basic humanitarian assistance and financing remain an immediate priority. Much of the $40 million that Norway will provide this year will be for relief aid.

The United Nations and its new, integrated mission have a key role in the Bonn implementation process in assisting the Afghan authorities and in sustaining the progress achieved, not least with regard to women's rights and all the rights of the child.

Norway supports the Secretary-General's proposal for a lean, integrated structure for UNAMA and a strong coordinating role for the Special Representative. The Afghanistan Support Group will work with UNAMA to improve coordination, and with multilateral and bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and the Afghan authorities. This must go hand in hand with meaningful assistance at the local community level. By using Afghan staff, UNAMA will promote national capacity and ownership of the process.

Continued, long-term commitment by the United Nations and its Member States is needed to ensure that Afghanistan remains firmly on the path to peace and reconciliation and does not again become a haven for terrorists. Constructive support, in particular by neighbouring States, will be crucial. The Council will do its part, next by adopting a resolution endorsing the new United Nations Mission.

We look forward to seeing UNAMA operational. Ultimately it is up to the Afghan leaders and people themselves to create conditions for lasting peace and development in their country. But the international community can and must help.

I resume my function as President of the Council. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — the associated countries Malta and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries belonging to the European Economic Area, Iceland and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

First of all, may I express the sorrow of the European Union at the consequences of the terrible earthquake that occurred in northern Afghanistan. This is one more hardship for the Afghan people, which has already suffered untold troubles. The European Union has already sent initial humanitarian assistance in this connection.

The past months have witnessed very important events on the path towards the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan through reconciliation and a representative government, as well as in eliminating the use of Afghan territory by terrorists and curbing narcotics production and trafficking.

First, an agreement was reached by the Afghan parties in Bonn on 5 December 2001, which constitutes the basic road map for the political future of Afghanistan. Secondly, there is the creation and full deployment of the International Security Assistance Force, known as ISAF, to which European Union members are currently the major contributors. Last, though not least, there was the Tokyo International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, co-chaired by the European Union.

In spite of these very positive events, enormous challenges remain before the Afghan people can regain a measure of normalcy. To name but a few, we can mention the timely and full implementation of the Bonn Agreement, the lack of security in wide areas of the country, the dire humanitarian situation, the dismal state of health and education, the situation of women and children, and the very serious and extensive risk arising from landmines. The European Union is committed to helping the Afghan people to surmoun these problems and is ready to carry its share in cooperation with neighbouring countries and the rest of the international community.

The European Union has played and continues to play a very important role in the current Afghan process. Given that the United Nations has been entrusted with the central coordinating role, the European Union seeks to support and promote the United Nations-led process and the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. The European Union Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Klaus Peter Klaiber, has a primary role in the coordination of European Union efforts.

The European Union commends the Secretary-General for the excellent report, which summarizes the most significant developments for Afghanistan since the signing of the Bonn Agreement and proposes a structure for a United Nations presence in that country. We appreciate the effort made in recent months by the United Nations system under the guidance of the Special Representative to bring together their efforts and capacities so as to create a really integrated United Nations mission in Afghanistan.

The European Union supports the proposed mandate and basic operating principles for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which provide for an integrated structure under the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and which will support the implementation of the Bonn Agreement by the Afghans themselves with the assistance of the international community. The proposed overall structure seems to be well thought out and focuses on two main goals: building a strongly coordinated United Nations presence and avoiding dependency on international staff, so as to encourage development of domestic capacities.

However, in order to meet the objective of a light international footprint, UNAMA structures should take into account already existing initiatives in order to avoid duplication of work. The European Union welcomes the proposed structure of lead sectoral agencies for the implementation of humanitarian and reconstruction activities by the United Nations family in Afghanistan. We appeal for a strong and effective coordination and collaboration in the field. In this respect, the European Union would welcome a memorandum of understanding to be signed between the lead agency and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, in which the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency concept would be spelled out more in detail. The European Union is ready to support and assist UNAMA.

I will now turn to the most pressing issue in Afghanistan today, which is security. Thanks to the efforts of the international community, Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for terrorists, and we have been able to avoid a humanitarian disaster. However, these developments achieved thus far with enormous effort are not guaranteed.

Security across Afghanistan is an essential element for achieving the goals set forth in Bonn. We support the early extension of ISAF beyond its current six-month mandate. Aside from their participation in ISAF, European Union's member States are contributing and will continue to contribute to the creation of Afghan security institutions, including the development of a national army and an independent police force. In this regard, the European Union profoundly regrets the tragic loss of five young nationals of two of its member States whose lives were given in the effort to improve the security situation in Afghanistan.

The European Union underlines the importance of an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for reducing the risks that stem from the existence of numerous informal armed groups and bringing their members into civil society. Furthermore, the European Union considers the formation of a national army of the utmost importance. We welcome the work ISAF has initiated to train the first battalion of the Afghan National Guard. The development of national and local police and an effective justice system are also essential components in creating a stable and secure environment.

Concerning the political situation, the main goal should be the punctual implementation of the measures agreed to in Bonn. The emergency Loya Jirga will inaugurate the next major phase of the path towards a fully representative, multi-ethnic and democratic Afghan political system. It is essential that the selection process take place in a secure and neutral political environment. The European Union will continue to support this process and will seek to ensure that it is free from intimidation or any other form of pressure or manipulation. Through important contributions of several of its member States and of the European Commission, the European Union is helping to finance the emergency Loya Jirga.

The European Union reiterates its firm support to the Interim Authority of Afghanistan. We call upon the current Interim Authority, future administrations and Afghan leaders to support and fully implement the Bonn Agreement in order to ensure respect for the rule of law, democracy, pluralism and the human rights of all, including those of women, children and all ethnic groups. The commitment entered into in Bonn to hold free and fair elections within two years of the convening of the Loya Jirga should be strictly adhered to.

The European Union believes that Afghanistan should be guided by the following generally accepted principles enshrined in international instruments to which Afghanistan is party: responsible and representative Government with a mandate periodically renewed by the Afghan people; commitment to political pluralism; respect for human rights and the rights of minorities, without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion, gender or any other distinction;

commitment to maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring countries and to the prevention of the use of Afghan territory for subversive or terrorist purposes or activities; and commitment to poppy eradication and to the prevention of drug trafficking.

All of those principles should be properly reflected in the future constitution to be adopted within the time frame agreed in Bonn. The European Union is ready to maintain an active dialogue with the Interim Administration and successor Governments in order to assist in attaining the political objectives laid down in Bonn and to ensure Afghan ownership of the political process and the reconstruction of the country.

The reconstruction of Afghanistan is essential to attaining the objectives set out in Bonn. The European Union is committed to that goal and, through the assistance provided by its member States and by the European Community, is one of the leading partners in both humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan. The European Union co-hosted a successful Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group meeting in Brussels in December 2001, which paved the way for the Tokyo Conference. It is pertinent to recall that the co-chairs' summary of conclusions of the Tokyo Conference stressed the idea that reconstruction assistance will be conditional upon all Afghan parties positively contributing to the process and goals agreed in Bonn.

Through contributions announced at Tokyo and thereafter, the European Union will provide 600 million euros, which represents 30 per cent of the total announced pledges for the year 2002. Similarly, the European Union has pledged 2.3 billion euros for the period 2002-2006, covering 23 per cent of the needs identified by the joint assessment by the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. This, in turn, represents about 45 per cent of the total announced commitment of the international community.

An accountable Afghan administration and effective donor coordination are imperative for the reconstruction process to succeed. Afghanistan needs accountable, transparent and efficient authorities. Donors can support them through coordination that follows the procedures agreed to in Tokyo. The Presidency of the European Commission, in its capacity as co-chair of the Steering Group, will endeavour to achieve close coordination with other major donors, international financial institutions and United Nations agencies. In that regard, the Afghanistan reconstruction Implementation Group can play a coordinating role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan until a consultative group is established.

There is an acute need for continued humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan under effective United Nations coordination. The European Union will support the efforts of the humanitarian agencies on the ground. As regards donor coordination, the Afghan Support Group could contribute to bridging the gap between humanitarian assistance and the beginning of assistance for the country's reconstruction. Given that the chairman of the Support Group also holds a vice-chairmanship of the Implementation Group, the risk of problematic transition gaps is reduced even further.

Respect for human rights is essential for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups. The European Union will assist in establishing national and local structures to ensure respect for human rights without discrimination. The European Union believes that Afghan women must enjoy equal access to education and employment, have the opportunity to participate without discrimination in the political and social life of their country and be able to play a central role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The European Union calls on the United Nations and on all of Afghanistan's partners to support relevant national initiatives and to fully integrate gender considerations in their political dialogue and reconstruction programming.

Successful reconstruction of Afghanistan and the implementation of the Bonn Agreement will depend to a large extent on the cooperation and commitment of neighbouring countries. In that regard, the European Union is ready to take into account this regional dimension.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that peace, security, stability and reconstruction in Afghanistan are interdependent issues. They should be addressed first and foremost by the Afghan people, but the international community should not falter in its support. The European Union stands ready to make its contribution to that common task.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I too would like to begin by conveying to our Afghan brothers, on behalf of my Government and the people of Pakistan, our profound grief and sympathy over the tragic loss of life and the material devastation caused by the earthquakes in the northern part of Afghanistan, which have also affected north-western parts of Pakistan. I want to tell my brother Ambassador Ravan Farhâdi, present here, that we in Pakistan share his grief and pain, just as we have always felt the pain and grief of Afghanistan in its difficult moments. We know that this is a moment of supreme grief for his people. The Government and the people of Pakistan would like to do whatever they can to help their Afghan brothers.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette, who I understand made a comprehensive presentation earlier this morning on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2002/278).

We are delighted to see you in the Chair this morning, Mr. Minister, presiding over an important meeting of the Security Council on a subject that has been haunting us all for decades, and which today affects us all and must be the focus of the priority attention of the international community in terms of chasing away the ghosts of violence and misery that have been haunting that unfortunate and war-ravaged country.

We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, to restore peace and stability in Afghanistan. We also welcome the continuing efforts and engagement of the United Nations in facilitating the implementation of the Bonn Agreement.

In this regard, we support the Secretary-General's proposal, contained in his report, for a two-pillared structure for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) — first, to facilitate the political process in Afghanistan, and secondly to assist in the humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of that war-ravaged country. We agree with the concept of what is described by the Secretary-General as a "light expatriate 'footprint'" (*S/2002/278, para. 98*) and with its aim to bolster Afghan capacities. We hope that the United Nations will continue to play its role in helping the Afghans find home-grown solutions to their problems and bring their country back into the comity of nations as a responsible and law-abiding State.

In trying to assist in Afghanistan's political, humanitarian and economic recovery, we must draw lessons from the country's tragic past. Not only is Afghanistan one of the most difficult challenges the international community has faced in recent times, it also represents a case in which a country so much in need of international support and assistance was neglected, isolated and left in the lurch, mercilessly rendering it a wilderness that attracted runaway dissidents and terrorists from all over the world.

Today, however, is not the time for remorse or for remaining frozen in the past. We need a new beginning. Unusual situations always warrant unusual and fresh responses and approaches. As we seek to rebuild Afghanistan, we must be guided by the need not only to rectify the mistakes of the past, but also to avoid repeating them. History always provides the most relevant lessons.

Now that the international community has committed itself to healing Afghanistan, we hope that it will not walk away from the country again. It must remain engaged in Afghanistan and in the region. A country ravaged by war has to be rebuilt; a society torn by conflicts has to be healed. All this requires commitment and perseverance. Afghanistan must never again be allowed to become a breeding ground or haven for terrorists. The long-term solution of the problem of terrorism in Afghanistan lies in the restoration of peace and stability and in the reconstruction of the country. No amount of financial resources alone would be sufficient to accomplish those tasks. The international community must honour its obligations, not only for the benefit of the people of Afghanistan, but also for its own greater good.

The time has now come to break the vicious circle of the past. Humanitarian relief and reconstruction plans must be aimed at genuinely addressing the causes and consequences of the instability and violence which the Afghan people have endured for decades. Every economic plan, whether for relief or for reconstruction, must generate job opportunities and employment for the common Afghan people — those who are living in the country. Their attention must be diverted from misery and violence to peaceful and constructive activities.

Extensive blueprints have been prepared by the regional organization known as the Economic Cooperation Organization. My friend Ambassador Farhâdi is well aware of the goals and objectives of that organization, which I had the privilege to serve as its Secretary-General for four years. Those blueprints could be utilized in converting this landlocked county into a bridgehead connecting Central Asia with the warm waters of the Arabian Sea.

Afghanistan has the potential to be the shortest transit route between the Central Asian States and the rest of the world. In due course, road, rail and gas and oil pipeline projects — which are already there — passing through Afghanistan could bring unprecedented economic well-being to the country. Perhaps this would require various consortiums to be constituted by the international community. No politics should be involved in this effort; it is a genuine need of the Afghan people, and the world at large would benefit from such economic development.

Here I must caution that any attempt sponsored or exploited by external vested interests to pit Afghanistan against any of its neighbours or to deepen its ethnic or sectarian divide would only prolong the agony of its people. We must guard against any such temptation. It is needless to emphasize that an Afghanistan at peace with itself and with all of its neighbours is the surest safeguard of its own future security, as well as that of the entire region.

Security remains the most pressing issue at this point in time. It is the very prerequisite for the implementation of the Bonn Agreement and is imperative for a stable political and economic future in Afghanistan. Lack of security has been a major hindrance to stability in the past and continues to threaten peace today. The Afghan people have suffered far too long at the hands of ambitious warlords. Equally, nature has not been fair to the Afghan people; the country has suffered frequent calamities.

The international community must therefore ensure that the old rivalries and hatreds which once wreaked havoc across Afghanistan are not given a chance to obstruct the establishment of a stable political dispensation in that country. Similarly, humanitarian relief must come forth generously to alleviate the misery of the Afghans who are either displaced internally or who have been forced to leave their country for reasons beyond their control.

Without security, there can be no peace in Afghanistan, no unity, no stability, no humanitarian relief, no reconstruction or recovery. I think that this is a point that everyone appreciates, understands and agrees with. Even the Secretary-General has made this point. The Bonn Agreement stipulated the establishment of a United Nations mandated force for the maintenance of security in Kabul as well as in other areas of the country.

While we support the deployment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, we feel that its size and scope must now be expanded and extended to all of the country, especially its major urban centres. ISAF, in the absence of a proper Afghan security force, is the only option we have at the moment, and restricting it only to Kabul would, in effect, defeat the very purpose for which it was established.

In addition to the efforts of the international community to help them, we hope that all Afghan factions and groups will avail themselves of this unique opportunity to extricate their country from the abyss in which it has remained for the last two decades. The success of the Bonn Agreement will depend on how the Afghan leaders acquit themselves of rebuilding their country through a mutual spirit of accommodation. Tribal and ethnic structures and traditions will, of course, remain of special relevance in any future set-up. While the world owes the Afghans a helping hand, in the larger measure and in the ultimate analysis, it is they themselves who will make or mar the future of their country, and they recognize this.

Pakistan, for its part, remains committed to continuing to play its role in assisting the recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan. We have assured the Afghan Interim Administration, under the leadership of Chairman Hamid Karzai, of our full support and cooperation. Over the last two decades, Pakistan has been providing shelter to millions of Afghan refugees, without any outside assistance. In addition, we have recently pledged another $100 million worth of assistance for Afghanistan's immediate rehabilitation and reconstruction needs. No country, other than Afghanistan itself, has suffered more from the conflict and violence in Afghanistan than Pakistan, and no country could have a greater stake in the return of peace and stability to Afghanistan than Pakistan. My country, like the rest of the international community, hopes that this new era will bring positive changes to

Afghanistan. We hope that the efforts of the United Nations in Afghanistan will truly contribute to the achievement of peace, security and development in that country, which needs these so badly.

Finally, I need not emphasize again that this time, the international community must not walk away from Afghanistan, as it did in the past. It must demonstrate the political will and the determination to engage and help the Afghan people in rebuilding peace and the economy of their country, and this time the United Nations must be an effective instrument of relief and development in Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General is correct when he says in his report that Afghanistan is a shattered society. It will certainly take a long time to heal the wounds left by 23 years of war. The process of healing has started and must not be allowed to reverse itself. This requires from all — from the Afghans themselves as well as from the international community — a continued commitment and determination to stay the course. Afghanistan now has the chance at least to be a country at peace with its neighbours and with itself.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): At the outset, allow me to express my Government's sincere condolences to those affected by yet another earthquake, the one that struck northern Afghanistan last night. We are receiving disturbing information — that thousands may have died and many thousands more have lost their homes. Urgent assistance is needed to help the victims. We welcome the fact that the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General has already convened a meeting with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations in Kabul, with the aim of assisting the Interim Administration.

At the midpoint of the six-month term of the Interim Authority of Afghanistan, and with the Secretary-General's comprehensive report issued last week, we have a sufficient basis for reviewing the progress made thus far and for considering ways to proceed henceforth.

I am happy to note today that last Saturday, as the result of the successful "back to school" campaign, over 1 million Afghan children have gone back to school, many of them for the first time in six years. Looking back over the three and a half months since the Bonn Agreement was signed, we cannot but note that a number of significant achievements have been made. The Interim Authority has been established; the Loya Jirga Commission is up and running; the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been deployed; and the Tokyo Conference was held successfully, as were national conferences, with the participation of regional commanders and governors. It is also important to note that salaries have been paid to the civil servants of the central Government and that salary payments are on the way for local officials.

The fact that so much progress has been made in this short period towards the restoration of peace and stability is indeed extraordinary, but the situation in Afghanistan is still fraught with grave difficulties. It is therefore necessary to continue our efforts well into the foreseeable future so as to ensure that Afghanistan will be able to pursue its course of development in a peaceful and stable environment. In this context, allow me briefly to touch upon a few points which Japan believes to be of particular importance.

On the political front, the next important step is the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga. We warmly commend the accomplishments made so far by the Loya Jirga Commission, particularly its successful visits to the regions. A number of additional needs will emerge as the convening of the Loya Jirga approaches, and the timely initiatives taken by the Governments of Germany, the United Kingdom and other countries to support this process are much appreciated.

It is important for all parties to remind themselves that the emergency Loya Jirga will mark only the midpoint in the process leading to the establishment of a legitimately elected Government. Key words for the Loya Jirga should be compromise and tolerance, with all parties working together to establish an effectively functioning Transitional Authority that is capable of carrying the country through the next phase of the Bonn process.

It is essential to ensure that the recovery and reconstruction process continues to have a positive impact on the political process. In this regard, all parties need to be reminded that, as stated in the co-chairs' summary of conclusions of the Tokyo Conference,

> "assistance will be conditional on all Afghan parties' positively contributing to the process and goals agreed in Bonn."

On the other hand, we are beginning to detect a certain level of frustration in Afghanistan at the current pace of implementation of the pledges and commitments. The donors and United Nations agencies must do their part by rapidly implementing their assistance in a strategically coherent and coordinated manner so that the people of Afghanistan can tangibly feel the will of the international community. While I am happy to note that some concrete results are starting to emerge, as exemplified by the "Back to School" campaign led by the United Nations Children's Fund, we will need to strengthen our efforts so as to continue producing such results. In this connection, the Implementation Group meeting to be held in Kabul on 10 and 11 April under the chairmanship of Finance Minister Amin Arsala will be an important opportunity to coordinate our assistance to Afghanistan.

For its part, Japan has been making steady progress in the disbursement of the $250 million that it pledged in Tokyo for 2002. As introduced by Under-Secretary-General Prendergast in his statement to the Council two weeks ago, Japan has funded the United Nations Development Programme's Recovery and Employment Afghanistan Programme, designed to provide employment for over 20,000 people in labour-intensive public works projects in Kabul. Japan is the single largest contributor to the "Back to School" campaign. Other recent contributions include $20 million for demining activities and $12 million for basic medical equipment, medicine and other health-related items. I urge Council members to refer to the fact sheet attached to the distributed text of my statement for a more comprehensive list of Japan's contributions as of March 2002.

I have touched upon two important aspects of the situation in Afghanistan: the political process, on the one hand, and recovery and reconstruction, on the other. Needless to say, neither of these processes can proceed without the provision of nationwide security. In this regard, we thank the countries participating in ISAF, especially the United Kingdom for its leadership, and welcome the progress made so far in the training of the Afghan military and police. We take note of the request made by Chairman Karzai for the expansion of ISAF and agree with the Secretary-General that, whatever form of international security assistance is to be provided, speed is of the essence. I wish to add my voice to those who are asking the Council for its early examination and its determined action.

Before I conclude, allow me to reaffirm Japan's support for the Secretary-General and his Special Representative as they pursue their mandate in Afghanistan. In this context, we hope that the Security Council will act soon so that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan will be established in a timely manner.

Lastly, let me appeal to the people of Afghanistan to continue their efforts to produce concrete results on both the political and reconstruction fronts, which are also necessary in order to sustain the willingness of the international community to lend its support. I say this not as a critic, but as a committed friend of Afghanistan. All of us here at the United Nations know how difficult it is to sustain international attention, and this unique opportunity to help Afghanistan develop as a stable and prosperous country must not be squandered.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Let me at the outset welcome you, Sir, to New York and congratulate you on the skill with which Norway, Ambassador Kolby in particular, has guided the work of the Security Council this month. Let me at the outset also associate myself and the Government and people of Australia with the expressions of regret from our colleagues today at the appalling natural tragedy which has occurred in Afghanistan. Ambassador Farhâdi has the sympathy and support of all Australians.

It is very timely and relevant to hold a meeting on Afghanistan and to do so in a format that allows for the views of interested Member States to be heard. We all have a stake in seeing Afghanistan recover and we all have a responsibility to do what we can to help.

The Secretary-General's report presents a comprehensive picture of the situation in Afghanistan and the challenges ahead. Australia agrees with and welcomes the thrust of the report. We would like to draw out three aspects which we feel will be important to the success of the United Nations involvement in Afghanistan.

First, as to the issue of security, there is for now no greater risk to Afghanistan's recovery than a possible lapse back into violence. Ridding Afghanistan of the terrorist threat posed by Al Qaeda and Taliban

fighters remains the first priority. There can be no true security in Afghanistan, and indeed beyond, until this is achieved.

Unfortunately, this of course is not the only threat. The impulse in Afghanistan to resort to violence to achieve political and other objectives remains dangerously real. This impulse can be and is being dampened by the external military presence, but such a presence is not the long-term answer. Ideally, one might want to see the International Security Assistance Force expanded numerically and extended geographically. This is to be encouraged, as is an extension of its mandate beyond the initial six-month period, but planning also has to be based on realistic expectations.

Consequently, the responsibility of Afghan leaders to achieve political progress, as set out in the Bonn Agreement, is all the greater. The successful convening of the emergency Loya Jirga must be pursued with utmost vigour. The risk of a return to violence is inversely related to the authority and legitimacy that the Loya Jirga and Interim Administration achieve. Political progress is also needed to underpin a unified national military. Afghanistan's neighbours, including through the "six-plus-two" group, can help foster a benign security environment.

This brings me to my second point, and it is this: political legitimacy does not emerge in a vacuum. It requires resources and the intelligent deployment of resources. The Tokyo Conference demonstrated the willingness of the international community to support Afghanistan. For its part, Australia has pledged over 40 million Australian dollars. We have also made a contribution to the Afghan Interim Administration Fund.

While the international support is welcome, it is important that funds be made available expeditiously and that programmes be coordinated. We therefore fully support the Secretary-General's intention for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to have a unified, integrated structure under the authority and leadership of Mr. Brahimi. It will be important, too, that political objectives and relief, recovery and reconstruction activities be mutually supporting. All United Nations agencies need to work towards common goals.

International assistance should build up the strength and authority of Afghan institutions and not substitute for them. UNAMA should therefore be a lean operation with a light footprint and with a decentralized structure to support regional activities. The ultimate yardstick of UNAMA's success will not be what it has done, but what it has helped Afghans — including Afghan civil society and the private sector — to do.

The third point I want to make also relates to resources and legitimacy, but from a different perspective.

The efforts of the international community can and will be undermined if illegal sources of funds are available to those who do not accept the authority of the Afghan State. For this reason, among others, the fight against the production and trafficking of illicit drugs needs to be a very high priority. We welcome the intention to build a strong drug-control unit in the Afghan police. We also encourage the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to work closely with the Interim Administration.

Alternative sources of income need to be found quickly to avoid a resurgence of criminal activity. Aid needs to be creatively designed and speedily delivered. Reconstruction must proceed together with relief and recovery. The role of the private sector, small and medium-sized enterprises and traditional trading capabilities should be emphasized.

Finally, it must be said that no durable peace, reconciliation and development is possible without explicit attention to the rights and special needs of Afghan women and children. These considerations must be woven into all of UNAMA's activities. Women should be fully involved in all decisions about Afghanistan's future. Consistent with resolution 1325 (2000), a gender perspective should inform Afghanistan's post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building.

We Australians have no illusions about the complexity of the task of rebuilding Afghanistan. The Secretary-General's report does, however, provide a realistic basis for planning how best the United Nations can contribute.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for his kind words.

The next speaker is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (India): Thank you, Mr. President, for accommodating me in the forenoon portion of today's Council meeting. We welcome you to the Council and convey our deep appreciation of the contribution of Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby and his team to the work of the Council. Today's meeting is timely and, under your presidency, most appropriate, as Norway has provided valuable assistance for Afghanistan. We should also like to congratulate Mexico on last month's presidency and on having brought greater transparency to the work of the Council by holding open briefings by the Secretariat on issues of importance, including Afghanistan.

We convey our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the people of Afghanistan and to the Interim Administration for the terrible loss of life and devastation in the tragic earthquake that befell their country yesterday.

On 22 December 2001, when the Interim Administration of Chairman Karzai took charge, the challenges confronting Afghanistan were many, and each was daunting and formidable by itself. Among those challenges were: to provide security without a national army or police for a people which had not known peace for decades; in a landscape of ruin, to provide some of the bare minimum public services that any society expects from its Government; to provide humanitarian assistance to poverty-stricken areas devastated by war and drought; to reconstruct a country utterly shattered by decades-long conflict; to heal the deep wounds of the past; to promote national reconciliation; and to restore kinship.

The Interim Administration has just completed 100 days. So much was expected of it, and quite remarkably, it has accomplished so much in so little time, with so few resources. It is a vindication of the faith reposed by the international community in the Interim Administration and in the overwhelming yearning of the Afghans to break from the recent past and to move towards a future full of promise and hope. It is a manifestation of the indomitable spirit for which the Afghans are justly known.

However, no one is in doubt that the Interim Administration has only just taken the first steps in a long and arduous, but fulfilling and rewarding, journey. The Taliban and Al Qaeda, the twin tormentors of Afghanistan, are down but not out. As recent events in Afghanistan have amply demonstrated, those forces of darkness are still there, hidden in caves and crevasses, lying low and waiting for an opportunity to strike back. Collectively, the international community has paid a very heavy price for allowing those malevolent forces to seize and dominate Afghanistan. Those forces can have no place in Afghanistan or anywhere else. They have to be extirpated at the root in the interest not just of Afghanistan but also of the countries in its neighbourhood and of the international community. This is a collective imperative and obligation from which we cannot turn away, no matter how long it takes or how demanding it may become.

As clearly brought out by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2002/278), the security situation, particularly outside Kabul, remains a cause of concern. While the Interim Administration is resolutely trying gradually to re-establish a sense of security, it lacks the resources, particularly a trained and well-equipped police and military force. Until such time as the Interim Administration acquires those resources, it requires and has requested international assistance. In January, in this very Chamber, Chairman Karzai appealed to the Council to expand and extend the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). While we recognize that this is a decision first and foremost of the members participating in ISAF, the Council should bring its persuasive powers to bear on them, as must the international community as a whole, to convince them that this is a calling from which they cannot, and should not, turn away.

It is encouraging to note the steps being taken by the Interim Administration, in collaboration with the international community, to train a national army and a modern police force for Afghanistan. The importance of strengthening the capacity of the Interim Administration to build an indigenous, professionally trained security apparatus cannot be over-emphasized. In fact, it is also intrinsic to the exit strategy for the international security presence in Afghanistan.

The timely nomination of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga and the work it has carried out in the last 50 days, including its consultations with a cross-section of the Afghan population — not just in major towns, but also elsewhere — bodes well for a representative gathering which reflects the will and the wishes of the Afghan

people. We appreciate and commend the work done so far by the Commission. However, let me say a word of caution: fears have been expressed that the Taliban and its backers are attempting to subvert the process by insinuating themselves into it. We hope that the Commission will be alert to this and will ensure that the Taliban and its sympathizers, in any guise, will have no place in the emergency Loya Jirga.

The meeting in Tokyo in January of this year brought significant, although not sufficient, commitments for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. But to create circumstances in which the billions of dollars pledged can be productively utilized, millions are required now. The Secretary-General has eloquently brought out the Interim Administration's dire need for financial resources to pay the salaries of civil servants, without which the Interim Administration can neither extend and maintain its authority over the entire country nor deliver basic services, such as education and health care, to the Afghan people. It is therefore of paramount importance that the international community extend its unflinching help. The sense of hope that has been kindled in Afghanistan should not be allowed to be extinguished by a tardy or delayed response. Innovative approaches to cut through bureaucratic procedures are the need of the day.

Afghanistan's rehabilitation and reconstruction will take time, will need considerable resources and will need patience. But, once peace and security have been restored in Afghanistan, which we hope will soon be in the case, the arc lights of the media will no longer find this to be newsworthy. However, the international community must stay the course and not turn its back on Afghanistan. On its part, India is committed to extending assistance to Afghanistan over the long term, covering not just immediately required humanitarian assistance in the form of a million tons of wheat and much-needed medical aid, but also in sectors including police training, education, housing, human-resource development, public transport, information technology and industrial development. India has already extended a line of credit of $100 million. During Chairman Karzai's visit to India on 26 and 27 February, bilateral cooperation was discussed in detail. Our Prime Minister also announced a grant of $100 million for immediate utilization by the Afghan Government. We are ready to do more.

For its developmental efforts to be productive and lasting, the international community must match generosity with wisdom. It is therefore important to listen carefully to what the Afghans need and to respect their priorities and preferences, as no one knows better than the Afghan people what is good for them and how best to bring it about. The temptation to foist on them solutions or structures not suitable or responsive to the local environment should be resisted, as these will serve the cause of neither the donors nor the Afghans.

In determining what will work, sustainability should be the touchstone. We therefore strongly recommend that we do not lose sight of the least-developed-country perspective. We believe that emphasis on South-South cooperation in meeting the development needs of Afghanistan should be an integral part of the international community's strategy.

Women in Afghanistan were particularly traumatized by the Taliban and its brand of misogyny and obscurantism. Their role in rebuilding Afghanistan is central. We appreciate, and fully support, the efforts to increase the role and participation of women in the decision-making structures of the Interim Administration. A continued commitment to this norm will not just help in overcoming the harsh and inhuman practices of the Taliban against women, but will be a significant contribution towards building the bulwark of a more tolerant, participative democratic and forward-looking society.

Afghanistan suffered for long at the hands of the Taliban, which were foisted upon it from outside. The international community must work together to prevent such interference in the future and to stop Afghanistan from becoming a playground for the pursuit of narrow national interests or for re-enacting the Great Game with a new cast. The need, therefore, is for greater ownership, openness and transparency in the actions of the international community in Afghanistan. Outdated structures which failed to prevent conflict in Afghanistan in the past are unlikely to promote peace in the future. To persist with these may prove to be a costly triumph of hope over experience. The role of the Group of 21, which brings together in a cooperative framework a large number of countries with the ability to contribute towards peace and prosperity in Afghanistan, should be strengthened.

The United Nations has made a significant contribution in assisting the Interim Administration to

address the enormous challenges ahead of it. We therefore support the Secretary-General's proposal to establish the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, with a light international footprint, to continue the engagement of the United Nations in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Brahimi richly deserves our deep appreciation and recognition for his outstanding contribution, first in fostering the Bonn Agreement, and then in so ably assisting the work of the Interim Administration. We wish him every success in his demanding endeavours and assure him of our full support.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate our prime concern. By all evidence, the Interim Administration is doing all it can to bring peace and prosperity to Afghanistan. Is the international community matching this endeavour with the timely assistance that Afghanistan needs and deserves?

The President: I thank the representative of India for his kind words addressed to me.

There are still a number of speakers remaining on the list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I will suspend the meeting now.

The meeting was suspended at 1.35 p.m.